United Nations S/2016/11

Security Council

Distr.: General
6 January 2016

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus

I. Introduction

1. The present report on the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) covers developments from 21 June to 18 December 2015 and brings up to date, since the issuance of my previous report, dated 2 July 2015 (S/2015/517), the record of activities carried out by UNFICYP pursuant to Security Council resolution 186 (1964) and subsequent Council resolutions, most recently resolution 2234 (2015).

2. As at 15 December 2015, the strength of the military component stood at 860 for all ranks, and the strength of the police component stood at 57 (see annex).

II. Significant political developments

3. The talks between the Greek Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mustafa Akıncı, as well as their respective negotiators, have continued to take place at a steady and intensified pace. In addition, the sides continue to work intensively in various working groups of experts and technical committees. The leaders have consistently underscored that they seek to reach mutually beneficial solutions on issues which are being negotiated interdependently with the aim of moving the process forward. More details are to be found in my report on the status of the negotiations in Cyprus (S/2016/15).

4. Displaying their commitment to a common future, the two leaders issued a joint statement on 18 November condemning the incidents that occurred two days earlier, in which two vehicles belonging to Turkish Cypriots were targeted during protests in south Nicosia by Greek Cypriot youths throwing stones, resulting in two Turkish Cypriots being injured. The two leaders jointly affirmed that they stood together against racism and hatred, whatever the source, and that such deplorable acts would be thoroughly investigated and would not go unpunished. Nine people, four of them students, were subsequently arrested in connection with the incidents; five of the nine have been charged. The two leaders indicated that they would not allow such unacceptable incidents to jeopardize the ongoing negotiations in any way, in particular at the very time that they were trying in earnest to find a solution to the Cyprus problem.

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5. In response to the above-mentioned incidents, on 25 November, the two leaders announced the establishment of a technical committee on education tasked with reviewing research and good practices and undertaking new research on how education could contribute to conflict transformation, peace, reconciliation and the countering of prejudice, discrimination, racism, xenophobia and extremism and with devising a mutually acceptable mechanism for the implementation of confidence-building measures in schools and promoting contact and cooperation between students and educators from the two communities. In addition, the committee was tasked with making recommendations regarding the coordination of the two educational systems.

6. My Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, visited Cyprus from 23 to 26 October to gain a better understanding of how UNFICYP might best support the peace process in the coming period. In the light of the positive momentum in the negotiations, he also discussed with the sides their expectations regarding how the United Nations might support the implementation of an agreement. During the visit, Mr. Ladsous informed Mr. Anastasiades and Mr. Akıncı that the United Nations would start to engage in settlement-related planning in order to be prepared for any post-settlement role assigned to it by the two leaders and the Security Council.

III. Activities of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

7. UNFICYP is intended first and foremost to prevent a recurrence of fighting and to contribute to the maintenance of law and order and a return to normal conditions. Its mandate requires reconciling security considerations and the maintenance of the military status quo with allowing Cypriots who live and work in the buffer zone to pursue civilian activities and enjoy full and productive lives. Such an approach, when successful, builds confidence between communities and contributes to the overall effort by the United Nations in support of the peace process.

A. Prevention of a recurrence of fighting and maintenance of the military status quo

8. During the reporting period, UNFICYP continued to maintain the integrity and stability of the buffer zone by means of regular patrols, detailed observation and sustained liaison at all levels. Direct and effective lines of communication and regular meetings with the respective commanders allowed the Force to avert attempts by both sides to effect low-level changes to the military status quo and allowed the Force to impartially address and manage disputes that might otherwise have escalated to higher levels or led to heightened tensions. Building on the positive climate of the current and previous reporting periods, UNFICYP maintained strong relations with each of the opposing forces. Nonetheless, the continued non-recognition by the opposing forces of the aide-memoire of 1989, the lack of a common understanding of the exact delineation of ceasefire lines and the contesting of UNFICYP authority in the buffer zone continue to pose challenges. Instances of unannounced construction or refurbishment of military positions along

the ceasefire lines on both sides also continued to cause concern, particularly when perceived as conferring a military advantage. Likewise, increased civilian access to and activity in the buffer zone through normalization continued to present specific challenges to the mission in terms of controlling the buffer zone and to strain resources.

9. Over the past six months, the Turkish forces have installed closed-circuit television equipment at 28 locations along the length of its ceasefire line, in addition to the existing 29 locations in sectors 2 and 4. Of the 57 closed-circuit television-equipped locations, 42 posts have seen no reduction in military personnel. Without such reductions, closed-circuit television cameras confer a military advantage and, as such, constitute a breach of the status quo. In addition, military positions established by both forces inside the buffer zone that violate the status quo, including in Strovilia, remain in place and are classified as permanent violations. The United Nations continues to hold the Government of Turkey responsible for the status quo in Varosha.

B. Demining activity

10. As I noted in my previous report, in May 2015, a mine clearance team from Cambodia, operating under the auspices of inter-mission cooperation with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), began to clear landmines displaced from a minefield north of the ceasefire line, near Mammari, into the buffer zone by heavy rains. A surface area of 16,691 m^2 was cleared, with a total of seven items found and destroyed. Given that that was the second mine-wash incident in that area in as many years, UNFICYP has received assurances from the Turkish Cypriot security forces that they will clear the minefield north of the ceasefire line. In the interim, temporary mitigation measures have been put in place to prevent such incidents in the future.

11. Following the transfer by Mr. Anastasiades to Mr. Akıncı of the coordinates of 28 minefields laid by the National Guard in the north in 1974, UNFICYP facilitated a survey by the United Nations Mine Action Service. On 7 July, 25 of the 28 locations were deemed and declared to not pose a threat. The remaining three locations, two of which are in a military-controlled area, were identified as requiring further technical intervention to determine with certainty that they were safe. Two further areas were identified from information received from the Turkish Cypriot security forces that require further intervention, one of which included a visible anti-tank mine alongside a disused road. Although work on these five areas is needed, since they are either inaccessible or well-marked, the mission has assessed that they pose no immediate risk to life.

12. The same Cambodian demining team carried out mine clearance in support of the opening of crossings at Lefka-Aplici/Lefke-Aplıç and Deryneia/Derinya from 28 September to 26 November. A technical survey at Deryneia/Derinya resulted in the western portion of the United Nations recorded minefield being assessed as posing no threat, thus enabling the Technical Committee on Crossings to proceed with plans to establish a crossing at that location. At Lefka-Aplici/Lefke-Aplıç, five dangerous areas totalling 1,815 m^2 were cleared around the crossing site. Thirty-one anti-tank mines and one trip flare were found and destroyed.

13. Despite repeated requests by UNFICYP, during the reporting period, no progress was registered on the issue of access to the four known remaining minefields in the buffer zone, of which three are under the control of the National Guard and one is under the control of Turkish forces. While the Turkish Cypriot side has indicated that it would accept the clearance of all four areas as a package, the Greek Cypriot side maintains the position that its three minefields are required in order to counter a perceived threat. Efforts continue at all levels to advance a more comprehensive approach to demining, both inside and outside the buffer zone.

14. The United Nations Global Advocate for the Elimination of Mines and Explosive Hazards visited Cyprus from 11 to 13 October to witness first-hand UNFICYP support to demining efforts in Cyprus and to raise awareness of the continued dangers posed by mines on the island.

C. Restoration of normal conditions and humanitarian functions

15. Relations between UNFICYP police and the police services on both sides remained cooperative and constructive during the reporting period, with daily communications at all levels, enhancing cooperation in addressing operational matters within the buffer zone. As part of its mandated task to contribute to the maintenance of law and order, UNFICYP police continued to assist and facilitate investigations into criminal matters occurring within the buffer zone.

16. In the case of the mixed village of Pyla inside the buffer zone, criminal activities on the part of members of both communities continued to increase, in particular relating to illegal casinos, which rose in number from four to seven during the reporting period. UNFICYP has intensified efforts to secure a practical solution to the casino issue in Pyla with cooperation from both sides.

17. During the hunting season, between September and December, UNFICYP recorded 69 incursions into the buffer zone by Greek Cypriot hunters who were often armed, compared with 54 such instances during the same period in the previous year. To help address such activities, UNFICYP police intensified its liaison with local authorities and intelligence-led patrolling, including joint patrols with UNFICYP military and game wardens, resulting in charges being made against five such hunters.

18. Parallel to such operational liaison, UNFICYP police facilitated four meetings of the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters. The Joint Communications Room continued to act as a forum for information exchange on criminal matters with intercommunal elements, including investigations of humanitarian cases.

19. During the reporting period, UNFICYP continued to face challenges to its authority in the buffer zone, including at times aggressive behaviour by individuals engaged in unauthorized activities. In such cases, UNFICYP urges the competent authorities to take prompt action, including through judicial proceedings.

20. Regarding its mandate to contribute to a return to normal conditions, UNFICYP continued to allow, to the extent possible, safe and orderly civilian activities in the buffer zone, issuing more than 809 permits for farming, providing access to employment and utilities and approving 21 of 22 applications for civilian construction projects. The mission continued to urge the authorities, local

community leaders and civilians to cooperate with the mission by providing relevant information on civilian projects in the buffer zone in accordance with established procedures. The university in Pyla continues to operate without UNFICYP authorization.

21. Incidents of non-compliance with established UNFICYP procedures, particularly by farmers, continued to cause concern. In one such incident, on 28 September, a Greek Cypriot farmer struck an anti-tank mine after driving his tractor across the northern ceasefire line into a marked Turkish forces minefield near Mammari. Although the farmer was not injured, the incident raised tensions between Greek Cypriot farmers and the Turkish forces in areas where farmers work in proximity to the ceasefire line of the Turkish forces.

22. From July to December, 922,553 official crossings of the buffer zone were recorded. UNFICYP continued to play an important role with regard to all interactions that took place at, around or through crossing points. In particular, UNFICYP police continued to provide escorts for convoys with civilians and humanitarian supplies at the Limnitis/Yeşılırmak crossing point in accordance with the agreement reached by the leaders in October 2010.

23. Beyond the buffer zone, UNFICYP continued to provide humanitarian support for 342 Greek Cypriots and 106 Maronites residing in the north, including through weekly deliveries of humanitarian assistance and by facilitating the post-mortem transfer of two Greek Cypriots for burial in villages in the north. Logistical support, including the delivery of school textbooks, continued to be provided to the Greek Cypriot primary and secondary schools on the Karpas Peninsula. Although none of the textbooks were rejected, Turkish Cypriot authorities continued the practice of vetting the Greek Cypriot textbooks. The appointment of 8 out of 11 teachers nominated by the Greek Cypriots to serve in schools on the Karpas Peninsula was approved by the Turkish Cypriot authorities.

24. Following agreement by Mr. Anastasiades and Mr. Akıncı, two Greek Cypriot nurses were authorized to provide services at a local clinic on the Karpas Peninsula during the reporting period. Requests for Greek-speaking doctors to attend to the health needs of elderly Greek Cypriots and Maronites in the north had yet to be addressed. The mission continued to engage with local authorities to ensure access to health, welfare and educational services for Turkish Cypriots residing in the south. Although there were no new developments regarding the establishment of a Turkish language school in Limassol, Turkish Cypriot teachers continued to provide Turkish language education to students at a high school and primary school attended by Turkish-speaking pupils.

25. UNFICYP assisted in addressing the legal and humanitarian issues faced by two Turkish Cypriots detained in the south and by one Greek Cypriot detained in the north during the reporting period.

26. UNFICYP continued to facilitate contacts between Nicosia municipal offices to promote enhanced cooperation, including through four meetings of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot deputy mayors and their respective teams to develop joint projects to address environmental, social and health issues of common concern. Likewise, UNFICYP continued to provide support to representatives of the Nicosia Master Plan — a bicommunal mechanism established in 1979 to address urban issues in old town Nicosia — in particular their efforts and plans to preserve

cultural heritage sites in Nicosia, including along the Green Line. More broadly, UNFICYP also continued to encourage the communities located inside the buffer zone to address issues such as the need to clean and care for the environment and, where possible, encouraged bicommunal efforts in those areas.

27. With a view to fostering bicommunal cooperation and reconciliation, UNFICYP supported 37 sporting, cultural, educational and other civil society events in cooperation with international and local partners, in which more than 5,200 individuals from both communities participated. This included a bicommunal concert in the buffer zone on 18 September by Greek and Turkish artists in support of peace and reunification, in which more than 3,800 people from both communities participated. The second International Cyprus Car Rally, which was held on 26 September and included a crossing of the buffer zone outside the walls of old town Nicosia, saw the participation of 66 racing cars, including cars from both communities and from other countries, compared with 45 in 2014. In addition, the Ledra Palace Hotel was host to some 58 bicommunal gatherings, including four meetings of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political party representatives under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia.

28. During the reporting period, as part of its contribution to confidence-building measures and their implementation, UNFICYP significantly stepped up its support to the bicommunal technical committees, taking on responsibility for five committees (on cultural heritage, environment, health, crisis management and humanitarian affairs) in addition to the three it already facilitates (on crossings, crime and criminal matters and broadcasting).

29. More specifically, following the announcement by the leaders on 28 May, UNFICYP supported the work of the Technical Committee on Crossings on the opening of the Lefka-Aplici/Lefke-Aplıç and Deryneia/Derinya crossings, facilitating six meetings and two site visits during the reporting period. Agreement was reached in the Committee on Routes, Technical Specifications and Modalities on project implementation for both crossing points. The European Union, for its part, amended its Green Line regulation to add Lefka-Aplici/Lefke-Aplıç and Deryneia/Derinya to the list of official crossing points and, on 17 November, its member States unanimously approved the allocation of 2 million euros through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for both crossings, to be drawn from the aid package for the Turkish Cypriot community. With both crossing sites declared mine-free, construction work is expected to begin in the first trimester of 2016. UNFICYP continues to facilitate discussions in the Technical Committee on possible additional crossings to be opened in the future.

30. The Technical Committee on the Environment resumed its activities after a two-year hiatus, meeting three times between July and December. The discussions, which UNFICYP facilitated, resulted in four joint visits to locations in the north and the south to address issues of mutual interest such as wastewater treatment and solid waste management. The Technical Committee on Broadcasting, for its part, met twice during the reporting period to discuss ways of overcoming interference on the frequency spectrum, including for FM commercial radio and television channels, future planning for digital television and the clearing of analogue television frequencies as dictated by the International Telecommunication Union. The Committee saw some success in persuading commercial FM stations to adhere to the correct modulation standards, thereby reducing interference within Nicosia.

UNFICYP facilitated three meetings of the Technical Committee on Health, which resulted in an exchange of information on various aspects of the health sectors on each side. Following up on the agreement by leaders to the interconnection of electricity grids as a confidence-building measure, UNFICYP also escorted joint technical teams into the buffer zone to undertake necessary repair work in preparation for the reconnecting of the grids.

31. For its part, UNDP, with strong support from the European Union, continued to work closely with the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage. The restoration of three cultural heritage sites was completed during the reporting period, including the Othello Tower in Famagusta. Tenders for 3 cultural heritage sites in the walled city of Famagusta and designs for an additional 12 sites are under way. Work is progressing on the restoration of the Apostolos Andreas monastery on the Karpas Peninsula. Separately, in support of a political settlement, UNDP continued to facilitate the Cyprus dialogue forum, bringing together 94 organizations from both communities, including political parties, businesses and industries, trade unions, non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations to build consensus on essential socioeconomic issues related to a settlement. The UNDP-managed peacebuilding programme in Cyprus, the Action for Cooperation and Trust Programme, is set to close by the end of 2015.

32. The Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce continued to provide a model for cooperation and to advocate actively for a solution to the Cyprus question. The intercommunal internship programme launched during the previous reporting period has been particularly successful, with 12 Greek Cypriots and 9 Turkish Cypriots expected to be placed with companies based in the other community by the beginning of 2016. Preparations for the implementation of a bicommunal business incubation centre are under way.

33. Considerable progress continues to be made in relation to freedom of religion and belief in Cyprus, with the number of services held by Greek Cypriots and Maronites in places of worship in the north increasing year by year, from 31 services approved out of 40 requests in 2013, to 52 approved out of 87 in 2014, and 93 approved out of 133 in 2015. Progress also continued to be made in opening for worship religious sites in the north that had been inaccessible since 1974, with the Turkish Cypriot authorities opening nine new sites for worship during the reporting period.

34. During the past six months, UNFICYP facilitated 49 religious services and commemorative events, involving more than 12,000 individuals, which were either conducted in the buffer zone or required crossing to the other side. Significantly, on 21 July and 30 September, UNFICYP facilitated the crossing of nearly 2,000 pilgrims, largely of Turkish origin, from the north to the Hala Sultan Tekke mosque in Larnaca, as jointly requested by the Primate of the Church of Cyprus and the Mufti of Cyprus. The 30 September pilgrimage to Hala Sultan Tekke took place in the presence of a representative of the Church of Cyprus for the first time.

35. Meanwhile, the religious leaders of Cyprus intensified their dialogue and joint efforts. In their first meeting with Mr. Anastasiades and Mr. Akıncı, held on 10 September at Ledra Palace Hotel in the buffer zone, the religious leaders reiterated their full support to the negotiations for a settlement of the Cyprus problem and promoted measures to further ease restrictions on freedom of religion,

including improved access to sites of worship across the island. On 24 November, the religious leaders issued a joint statement expressing their united voice against all forms of attacks, terrorism and violence in Cyprus and beyond, stressing that the dialogue they had experienced had strengthened their conviction that there would be no future without tolerance, mutual understanding, respect and peaceful coexistence. The visit to Cyprus of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief from 5 to 8 October, for its part, served to highlight the role that cooperation among the religious leaders had played in promoting progress towards the realization of freedom of religion or belief across the island.

D. Conduct and discipline and sexual exploitation and abuse

36. As part of my commitment to ensure compliance with the zero tolerance policy for any act of sexual exploitation or abuse by UNFICYP personnel, during the reporting period, UNFICYP continued to actively engage with the regional conduct and discipline team to implement the initiatives outlined in my report on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (A/69/779). As part of the UNFICYP accountability framework, the UNFICYP Conduct and Discipline and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Working Group continued to monitor on a quarterly basis compliance with the sexual exploitation and abuse plan of action adopted by the mission, designed to implement specific actions to prevent acts of sexual exploitation and abuse by mission personnel and to strengthen reporting mechanisms and assistance provided to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. In line with the provisions of my report, UNFICYP appointed a sexual exploitation and abuse focal point to coordinate and monitor activities related to the prevention, enforcement and remediation of sexual exploitation and abuse. In addition, the mission has appointed an immediate response team to gather and preserve evidence upon receipt of an allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse. UNFICYP is in the process of establishing a sexual exploitation and abuse standing task force, to begin functioning on 15 December 2015, to serve as the expert body within the mission providing guidance on operational and strategic sexual exploitation and abuse matters.

37. Between 1 January and 11 December 2015, a single category 1 allegation and one category 2 allegation were reported and referred for investigation. The category 1 allegation is related to a report of sexual exploitation and abuse that was unsubstantiated. It is notable that the total number of allegations for 2015 is less than that for 2014, for which a total number of 14 allegations were reported, of which 4 were category 1 (including 2 unsubstantiated reports of sexual exploitation and abuse) and 10 were category 2.

38. Training is at the core of the activities carried out by UNFICYP to raise awareness of the United Nations standards of conduct and to emphasize the Secretary-General's policy of zero tolerance for acts of sexual exploitation and abuse. During the reporting period, a total of 17 training sessions relating to conduct and discipline and sexual exploitation and abuse were conducted, in which 553 military personnel, 17 United Nations police personnel and 117 civilian personnel participated. As part of the sexual exploitation and abuse awareness campaign conducted by the mission, UNFICYP personnel have been provided with a list of sexual exploitation and abuse prevention activities to be included,

developed and assessed by each section/office during the 2015-2016 performance period.

IV. Committee on Missing Persons

39. As at 18 December, out of a total of 2,001 persons on the official list of missing persons, the bicommunal teams of archaeologists of the Committee on Missing Persons had exhumed the remains of 1,059 missing persons on both sides of the island. To date, the remains of 625 individuals have been identified and returned to their respective families, including those of 30 individuals during the reporting period. Between September and November, a Committee excavation team exhumed two burial sites containing the remains of 36 persons in a military area in the north of Nicosia. On 5 November, the Committee was notified by the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, Mr. Akıncı, that the Committee's excavation teams would have access to 30 suspected burial sites in military areas in the north of Cyprus over a three-year period, beginning in January 2016, with 10 sites to be excavated each year.

V. Financial and administrative aspects

40. As indicated in my previous report, the General Assembly, by its resolution 69/296, appropriated the amount of $52.5 million gross for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016, inclusive of the voluntary contribution of one third of the net cost of the Force, equivalent to $17.6 million from the Government of Cyprus and the voluntary contribution of $6.5 million from the Government of Greece.

41. As at 5 January 2016, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for UNFICYP amounted to $12.7 million. The total of outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to $992.9 million.

42. As at 5 January 2016, amounts owed to contributors for troop costs totalled $1.1 million. Reimbursement of troop and contingent-owned equipment costs has been made for the periods up to 31 October 2015 and 30 September 2015, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly schedule.

VI. Observations

43. I am heartened by the steady determination shown by the leaders during the intensified phase of the negotiations. I encourage them to maintain the momentum and to continue their efforts to bring the process to a successful conclusion and reach a comprehensive settlement as soon as possible.

44. It is my firm belief that measures to build confidence are an important element of the current efforts in that they reflect the common position of the leaders that the status quo is unacceptable. Furthermore, such measures have a tangible effect on the everyday lives of Cypriots and build a critical understanding that the status quo in Cyprus is not tenable and that an alternative and better future lies ahead. In that regard, I note that while the implementation of some confidence-building measures agreed to by the leaders is fully under way, there has been little to no progress on

others, such as mobile phone interoperability. I urge the leaders to implement all agreed measures in good faith and without delay.

45. I commend both sides for their decision to open additional crossing points at Lefka-Aplici/Lefke-Apliç and Deryneia/Derinya and for their sustained engagement during the reporting period to overcome difficulties on the ground and turn that decision into a reality. With high expectations raised, in particular within the local communities, I encourage both leaders to expedite preparations and open the crossings without delay.

46. The incidents of 16 November, during which two Turkish Cypriots were assaulted by Greek Cypriot youths in south Nicosia, were regrettable. Such incidents create tension and fuel mistrust between the communities at a time when the leaders are striving to achieve a lasting solution and to build confidence in a future of peaceful coexistence. The unity displayed by the two leaders in condemning the attacks is to be commended, rightly signalling that such acts would not be tolerated now or in a future united Cyprus.

47. The incidents raised concerns about the role of education in perpetrating prejudice and misconceptions and, by contrast, the role education can play, if utilized appropriately, in promoting a culture of peaceful coexistence. In that regard, I praise the leaders for their political vision and courage in establishing a Technical Committee on Education and I urge them to appoint its members without delay. I believe that such an initiative, if provided with the means necessary to formulate implementable recommendations, can make a critical contribution to the coordination of the two educational systems in a manner that promotes intercommunal tolerance and reconciliation befitting a united Cyprus.

48. UNFICYP support to demining activity, undertaken with invaluable assistance from UNIFIL and the United Nations Mine Action Service and excellent cooperation from both sides, has been successful not only in clearing hazardous materials, declaring minefields as no threat and paving the way for the opening of crossing points, but also in building trust between the parties at an important moment. I thank the Government of Cambodia, within the framework of inter-mission cooperation, for agreeing to the temporary deployment, from May to November 2015, of its mine clearance team to UNFICYP, as well as the Security Council for its ongoing support. In the absence of a dedicated demining capacity within UNFICYP, such support and cooperation may need to continue during the next reporting period.

49. The visit to Cyprus of the United Nations Global Advocate for the Elimination of Mines and Explosive Hazards, and the mine explosion incident involving a Greek Cypriot farmer, highlighted the ongoing threat posed by mines in Cyprus, a threat that often goes unnoticed given the presence of the opposing forces along the ceasefire lines. While I welcome the commitment of the Turkish Cypriots to clear the Turkish forces minefield adjacent to the ceasefire line near Mammari, I am concerned by the delays and urge that the clearance be done as soon as possible to avoid the occurrence of another mine wash incident in the area. Given the acceleration of the talks, it is all the more important that the two sides engage and take concrete steps without further delay towards island-wide demining.

50. The efforts of the two mayors and municipalities of Nicosia, together with those of the representatives of the Nicosia Master Plan, are welcome and continue to

provide a model of successful cooperation by further developing and promoting a shared vision for the future of the city, with support from UNFICYP. Likewise, business leaders continued to make a valuable contribution to the peace process by creating incentives and opportunities for entrepreneurs from both sides to engage with one another and by highlighting the economic benefits to come from a reunification of the island. I commend them once again for their vision, and I encourage enhanced support by all concerned for their efforts to promote private sector initiatives that can foster interaction between the communities and that have a positive effect on levels of trade across the buffer zone, which remain low.

51. As I have done in previous reports, I continue to call upon the leaders of both communities to exert efforts to create a climate conducive to achieving greater economic and social parity between the two sides and to widen and deepen economic, social, cultural, sporting or similar ties and contacts, including with a view to encouraging trade. Such contacts promote trust between the communities and help to address the Turkish Cypriots' concerns of isolation. I note that steps in that direction continue to be taken and urge both leaders to persist in addressing these issues. Likewise, I encourage the sides to fully engage civil society in the ongoing process, with a view to fostering grassroots support for a solution.

52. The ongoing dialogue among the leaders of the religious communities contributes positively to the climate surrounding the talks. By easing access to religious sites across the island, religious leaders have played an important role in fostering understanding and reducing mistrust between the communities which, in turn, has helped build grassroots support for reunification. In the critical months ahead, I strongly encourage both sides to continue to support this cooperation, including by enabling full access to the more than 500 churches and other places of worship in the north and to approximately 100 mosques in the south.

53. The closure of the UNDP Action for Cooperation and Trust Programme at the end of December has brought an end to 10 years of concerted support to civil society action in the reconciliation process in Cyprus. As the peace process enters a critical phase, platforms that provide a space for citizens from all sectors of society to engage and have a voice in a future settlement are becoming all the more important. In that regard, I am pleased that the Cyprus dialogue forum will continue in 2016 and hope that its work will be further supported and its recommendations taken into serious consideration.

54. The United Nations remains committed to supporting the critical humanitarian work being done on behalf of the families of victims through the Committee on Missing Persons. I welcome the confirmation by the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, Mustafa Akıncı, that the excavation teams of the Committee will have access to 30 suspected burial sites in military areas in the north of Cyprus. This represents important progress towards the objective of the Committee to locate, identify and return the remains of the many individuals who are still missing to their families. In the light of the advanced age of both relatives and witnesses, it is critical that the Committee be given the means and the information required to accelerate its work.

55. In the current positive climate, the role of UNFICYP in maintaining a conducive environment for negotiations remains of paramount importance to the overall success of the process. By pre-empting and responding in a timely and efficient manner to civilian, law and order and military issues that arise on a daily

basis in and around the buffer zone, UNFICYP helps to prevent political or military tension that could otherwise undermine the efforts of the two leaders. Despite minor incidents and challenges, which remained a regular occurrence, the situation along the ceasefire lines has remained calm and stable over the past six months.

56. Increased civilian use of the buffer zone continues to be a natural element of the normalization process, which UNFICYP promotes and facilitates, provided that it is undertaken in a safe and orderly manner, in accordance with established UNFICYP procedures. In this light, I once again call upon both sides to act decisively towards all who engage in activities not authorized by UNFICYP, thereby showing respect for UNFICYP authority in the buffer zone, supporting the Force in the implementation of its mandate and avoiding unnecessary tension. With the start of the hunting season, I am grateful for the good cooperation between UNFICYP and the Cyprus police in addressing instances of illegal hunting in the buffer zone.

57. It remains disappointing that the opportunity for direct communication between the commanders of the opposing forces has not yet been seized, despite the offer of facilitation and encouragement from UNFICYP. Opening such communication channels would undoubtedly assist in resolving or avoiding disputes and would also build critical trust, which would be key to a successful drawdown to agreed levels of foreign forces in a united Cyprus. I repeat my call for both sides to respond positively to the efforts of the Force Commander to strengthen relations and to explore the possibility of an early implementation of military confidence-building measures that could help improve the climate and build support for a settlement. I also once again call upon both sides to formally accept the aide-memoire of 1989, thereby bringing an end to the contestation of the United Nations delineation of the ceasefire lines. I reiterate that the ability of UNFICYP to play this role depends by and large on the commitment of the two sides to refrain from challenging the authority and legitimacy of UNFICYP in the buffer zone.

58. While acknowledging that closed-circuit television cameras can help monitor illegal activity in the buffer zone, and thus contribute to improved security in the area, such installations confer a military advantage and constitute a violation of the status quo if unaccompanied by a reduction in military personnel. I therefore strongly encourage a reduction in the military presence and posture along the ceasefire line, particularly in those positions that have been enhanced with closed-circuit television cameras, and particularly in the militarized area within the Venetian walls in old town Nicosia.

59. I note that the continued expansion of criminal networks and activities in the sensitive mixed village of Pyla, inside the buffer zone, continues to be a major source of concern and tension for the two communities in the village, the political leadership on both sides and the respective police services, creating a level of risk to the communities of Pyla that is avoidable. It is regrettable that, despite a shared acknowledgement of the problem and repeated facilitation attempts by UNFICYP, the sides have yet to agree on how to tackle the criminality and thereby reduce the risk to the communities of Pyla. Such coordination and cooperation between the respective police services would instil a broader confidence in the ability of the communities to live side by side in security, both at present and in a united Cyprus.

60. To respond to the new intercommunal dynamic outlined in the present report, UNFICYP significantly increased its support to the settlement talks during the reporting period, particularly in facilitating the work of the eight technical

committees, assisting with confidence-building measures and by providing security and logistical support to the (at times) daily meetings of the sides. Coupled with pressures on resources caused by increasing civilian access to the buffer zone, this new operational context has placed limitations on the ability of the mission to support new requirements, including the opening of two new crossing points. A capability gap has therefore emerged in the areas of UNFICYP military police, headquarters analytical and planning functions and patrols across the sectors to sustain current operations. To enable UNFICYP to be ready at this critical juncture, I request the Security Council to authorize a modest increase in force level, from 860 troops to 888.

61. In the light of positive developments on the ground and the support from the leaders during the visit in October of my Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, UNFICYP has, in coordination with my mission of good offices, intensified its planning in relation to a settlement, as requested by the Security Council most recently in its resolution 2234 (2015). This planning will continue to be guided by developments in the negotiations and the views of the sides on the possible role of the United Nations in that regard.

62. At the same time, I will continue to keep the operations of UNFICYP under close review, taking into account developments on the ground and the views of the parties, and report to the Security Council with recommendations, as appropriate, for further adjustments to the UNFICYP mandate, force levels and concept of operations as soon as is warranted.

63. I recommend that the mandate of the mission be extended for a period of six months, until 31 July 2016, together with a slight increase in the force level, from 860 to 888. I once again express my gratitude to the 34 countries that, since 1964, have contributed either troops or police or both to the mission, and I pay tribute to the 186 peacekeepers that lost their lives during that period in support of peace in Cyprus. It is incumbent upon all parties to work in a determined manner towards a comprehensive settlement, to which all Cypriots aspire and which would obviate the continuing need for a peacekeeping presence.

64. At this critical juncture in the peace process, and with encouraging prospects for an early solution, I count on the international partners of Cyprus to show commitment and resolve in supporting, in any way possible, initiatives and projects that build trust between the communities and foster support for a solution from the ground up. In that regard, I am particularly grateful for the sustained partnership between the United Nations and the European Union in support of confidence-building measures and other projects and initiatives, in particular crossing points, to the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage and the Committee on Missing Persons.

65. I would like to express my appreciation to my Special Representative and Head of UNFICYP, Lisa Buttenheim, including for her commitment and dedication in serving as my Deputy Special Adviser. I would like to thank also the UNFICYP Force Commander, Major General Kristin Lund, for her service. UNFICYP continues to lead the way in increasing the number of female personnel across the military, police and civilian components. Finally, I extend my thanks to all of the men and women serving in UNFICYP for the efficiency and commitment with which they have discharged the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Security Council. I also express my appreciation to my Special Adviser, Espen Barth Eide.

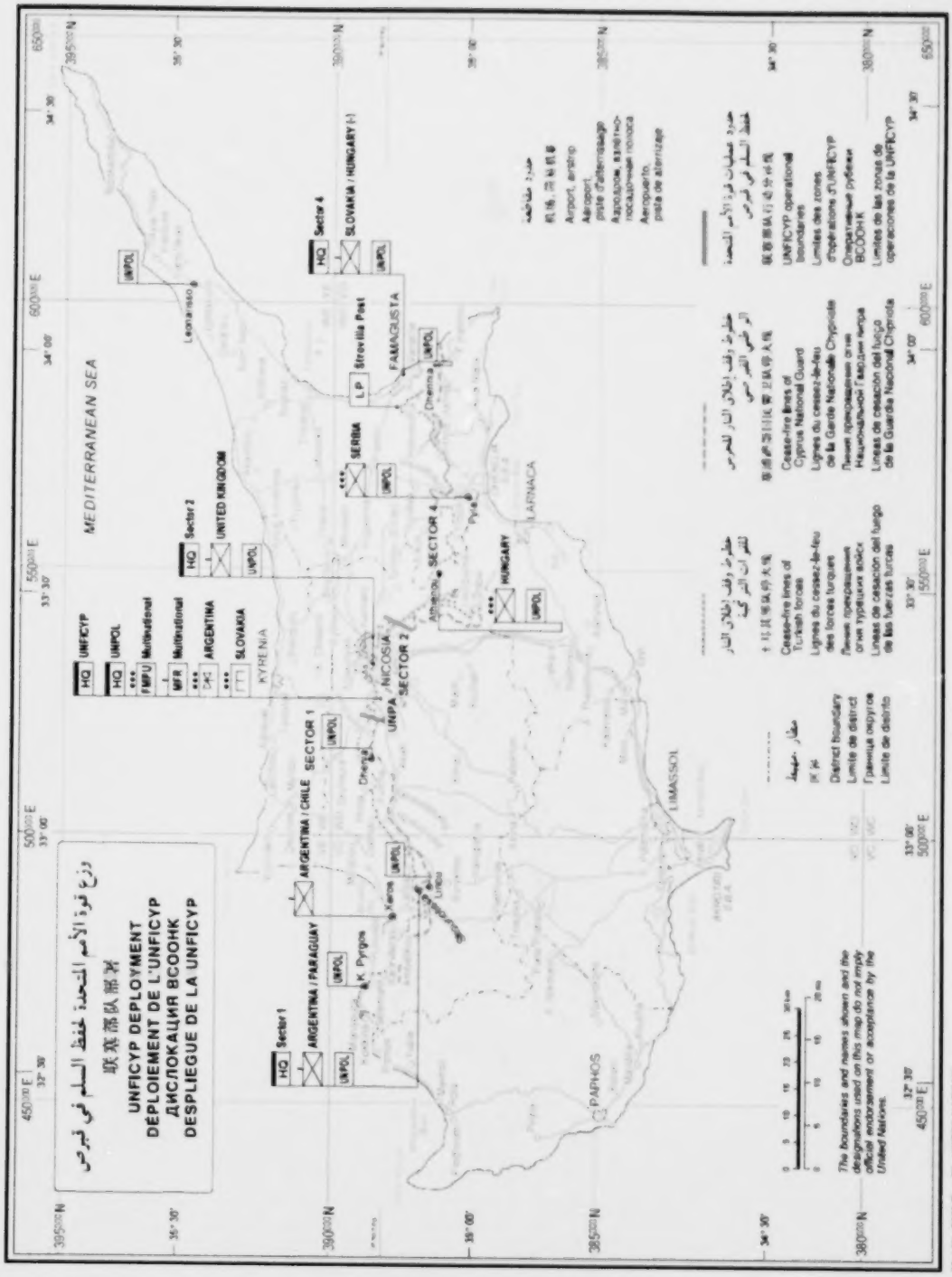
Annex

Countries providing military and police personnel to the United Nations operation in Cyprus (as at 15 December 2015)

Country	*Military personnel*
Argentina[a]	295
Austria	4
Canada	1
Norway	2
Hungary[b]	84
Slovakia[c]	200
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	274
Total	**860**

Country	*Police personnel*
Australia	12
Bosnia and Herzegovina	9
China	3
Ireland	12
Lithuania	1
Montenegro	4
Romania	3
Serbia	2
Slovakia	4
Ukraine	7
Total	**57**

[a] The Argentine contingent includes soldiers from Brazil (1), Chile (14) and Paraguay (14).
[b] The Hungarian contingent includes soldiers from Serbia (7).
[c] The Slovakian contingent includes soldiers from Serbia (39) and Ukraine (2).


UNFICYP DEPLOYMENT
DÉPLOIEMENT DE L'UNFICYP
ДИСЛОКАЦИЯ ВСООНК
DESPLIEGUE DE LA UNFICYP
联塞部队部署
وزع قوة الأمم المتحدة لحفظ السلم في قبرص
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
NICOSIA
LIMASSOL
PAPHOS
LARNACA
FAMAGUSTA
Leonarisso
Dhekelia
Xeros
K. Pyrgos
Pyla
Athienou
Dhorna
Strovilia Post
UNFICYP
UNPOL
Multinational
ARGENTINA
SLOVAKIA
UNITED KINGDOM
HUNGARY
SERBIA
SLOVAKIA / HUNGARY
ARGENTINA / CHILE
ARGENTINA / PARAGUAY
Sector 1
Sector 2
Sector 4
SECTOR 1
SECTOR 2
SECTOR 4
UNPA
Cease-fire lines of Turkish forces
Lignes du cessez-le-feu des forces turques
Линии прекращения огня турецких войск
Líneas de cesación del fuego de las fuerzas turcas
Cease-fire lines of Cyprus National Guard
Lignes du cessez-le-feu de la Garde Nationale Chypriote
Линии прекращения огня Национальной гвардии кипра
Líneas de cesación del fuego de la Guardia Nacional Chipriota
UNFICYP operational boundaries
Limites des zones d'opérations d'UNFICYP
Ограничение зоны BCOOHK
Límites de las zonas de operaciones de la UNFICYP
District boundary
Limite de district
Границы округов
Límite de distrito
Airport, airstrip
Aéroport, piste d'atterrissage
Аэропорт, взлетно-посадочная полоса
Aeropuerto, pista de aterrizaje
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
Map No. 2936 Rev. 85 UNITED NATIONS
December 2014
Department of Field Support
Cartographic Section

United Nations S/2016/12

Security Council

Distr.: General
8 January 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 6 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to attach herewith the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan in relation to the announced nuclear test of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (see annex).

It would be highly appreciated if the present letter and its annex would be circulated to all members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Kairat **Abdrakhmanov**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

16-00249 (E) 120116

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Annex to the letter dated 6 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan in relation to the announced nuclear test of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Today, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) announced that it had successfully conducted a hydrogen bomb test. In this regard, Kazakhstan strongly condemns and deems unacceptable such actions of DPRK in violation of Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009), 2087 (2013) and 2094 (2013).

As Co-Chair, along with Japan, of the ninth Article XIV conference of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Kazakhstan believes that the actions of DPRK seriously undermine the international community's efforts along the path of nuclear disarmament and strengthening the non-proliferation regime and global security in general, as well as the efforts of the majority of the countries of the world to ensure the early entry into force of the Treaty.

Kazakhstan, as a country whose people have directly experienced the deadly effects of nuclear weapons, voluntarily renounced the possession of a nuclear arsenal and initiated the adoption of a General Assembly resolution proclaiming 29 August as the International Day against Nuclear Tests.

We stand for a complete ban on nuclear tests in the world and call upon DPRK to abandon nuclear-weapon ambitions and resume negotiations on its nuclear issue in the six-party format involving China, Russia, the United States, the Republic of Korea and Japan.

We remain firmly convinced that the keys to security and sustainable development lie not in nuclear arsenals, but in wide and mutually beneficial cooperation, along with the peaceful resolution of all problems in international relations through negotiations.

Global security generally can be guaranteed only when the world frees itself from nuclear weapons. That is the goal that our nation and President Nursultan Nazarbayev have consistently called upon the international community to embrace and to reach, including President Nazarbayev's call for humanity to make a world without nuclear weapons its major goal in the twenty-first century.

Astana, 6 January 2016

United Nations S/2016/13

Security Council

Distr.: General
6 January 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 4 January 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), established by the Security Council in its resolution 2149 (2014) of 10 April 2014 and most recently extended by the Council in its resolution 2217 (2015) of 28 April 2015.

Following the usual consultations, I would like to inform you of my intention to appoint Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga (Gabon) as my Special Representative for the Central African Republic and Head of MINUSCA. Mr. Onanga-Anyanga has served as my Acting Special Representative for the Central African Republic and Head of MINUSCA since 16 August 2015.

I would be grateful if you could bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

16-00165 (E) 070116

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United Nations S/2016/14

Security Council

Distr.: General
6 January 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 6 January 2016 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that your letter dated 4 January 2016 (S/2016/13) concerning your intention to appoint Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga (Gabon) as your Special Representative for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic has been brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council. They take note of the intention expressed in your letter.

(*Signed*) Elbio **Rosselli**
President of the Security Council

16-00166 (E) 070116

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United Nations S/2016/15

Security Council

Distr.: General
7 January 2016

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus

I. Introduction

1. The present report on my mission of good offices in Cyprus covers developments from 15 May to 22 December 2015. It focuses on the record of activities carried out by my good offices mission under the leadership of my Special Adviser, Espen Barth Eide, regarding the full-fledged negotiations between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders. The Security Council, in its most recent resolution on Cyprus (resolution 2234 (2015), welcomed the progress made so far and the ongoing efforts of the leaders and their negotiators to reach a comprehensive and durable settlement.

II. Background

2. The negotiations to reach a comprehensive settlement continued to proceed on the basis of relevant Security Council resolutions as well as the Joint Declaration concluded by the sides on 11 February 2014. Building on the work conducted since the beginning of full-fledged negotiations in September 2008, the current round of talks between the Greek Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mustafa Akıncı, has been under way since 15 May 2015, when the leaders met in the presence of my Special Adviser and announced their intention to work tirelessly to reach a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus question as soon as possible. The leaders also agreed that the negotiations would be leader-led and they have since engaged in results-oriented and structured talks on core issues across chapters.

III. Status of the process

3. Since 15 May, the Greek Cypriot leader, Mr. Anastasiades, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr. Akıncı, have consistently shown great determination and political will to pursue their common objective of reaching a comprehensive settlement as soon as possible. They have personally engaged in extensive discussions, holding 19 meetings during the reporting period. Their negotiators and teams of experts have also been holding intensive meetings, often on a daily basis,

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negotiating a range of issues under the various chapters. A total of 62 such meetings were held during the reporting period.

4. Through such intensive and steady engagement, the sides have made considerable progress on many topics relating to the chapter on governance and power-sharing, including the federal legislature, the federal judiciary, federal competences, internal aspects of security, as well as on issues related to citizenship. They have also held extensive and productive negotiations on the economy chapter and have repeatedly reiterated their common vision to negotiate a settlement that would be in line with European Union principles. In addition, in a welcome development, the sides have agreed to increase the engagement in the process, under the aegis of the United Nations, of several other international actors, including the European Union and international financial institutions.

5. On 30 October, recognizing the work conducted by their respective negotiators and negotiating teams, the leaders announced that they intended to engage in an intensified phase of the talks, a phase in which they would take an even more direct role in the negotiations, with the purpose of seeking mutually beneficial solutions on issues where divergences remained. Throughout November and December, the sides therefore engaged in an intensified schedule of meetings, at both the leader and the negotiator levels.

6. During the intensified phase, they worked steadily on outstanding issues and focused particularly on the key chapter of property. This work built on the agreement reached and announced by the leaders on 27 July that the right of the individual to property would be respected and that there would be different alternatives for regulating the exercise of that right. The leaders also agreed that dispossessed owners and current users would have various choices regarding their claims to affected properties, including compensation, exchange and reinstatement, and that these would be subject to agreed criteria. Following the initial understandings reached on those key aspects and others of the property chapter, the sides have been steadily working to formulate the criteria to be applied to determine which of the various remedies mentioned above are to be used.

7. The leaders have reiterated their understanding that, owing to its international dimension, the issue of security and guarantees would be discussed at a later stage in the process. Given the recent intensified period of negotiations, however, it is my Special Adviser's increasing sense that both sides are ready to start discussing these issues. Following his appointment in August 2014, my Special Adviser has engaged on a regular basis with various regional actors that are pivotal to the process, notably the three guarantor Powers, namely Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The three guarantor Powers have repeatedly stated that the current window of opportunity for a solution to the Cyprus question should not be missed.

8. A prominent feature of the current round of talks has also been the agreement between the sides to enable the European Union to play an enhanced role in the peace process under United Nations auspices. That has resulted in several developments. First, the sides reached an agreement on 3 October to set up the Bicommunal Ad Hoc Committee on European Union Preparation to help prepare for the implementation of the *acquis communautaire* of the European Union in a future Turkish Cypriot constituent State. In addition, the Personal Representative of the President of the European Commission to the good offices mission of the United

Nations in Cyprus, Pieter Van Nuffel, is now fully engaged in Cyprus, together with a small team. Finally, during the reporting period, the European Commission held a series of workshops for Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot officials, which were conducted under United Nations auspices, involving expert officials specialized in different areas of the European Union *acquis*.

9. The political leadership of the European Union continued to be very supportive of the efforts of my Special Adviser in Cyprus and demonstrated its interest through several visits to the island at the highest level, including by the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, on 16 July, the High Representative of the European Union, Federica Mogherini, on 24 July, the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, on 11 September, and the Presidency of the European Council, represented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg, Jean Asselborn, on 22 December. In his annual State of the Union address to the European Parliament on 9 September, Mr. Juncker expressed his hope and ambition to see the island united in 2016. He offered his full support and noted the importance of continued good coordination between United Nations and European Union efforts.

10. Another noteworthy feature of the current round of talks has been the request by the leaders to my Special Adviser seeking expert technical assistance under United Nations auspices, where appropriate and with their consent, with the aim of supporting the two communities in finding sustainable solutions to economic issues in a post-settlement Cyprus. On that basis, my Special Adviser has actively engaged with international financial institutions, including the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, to seek their expert technical assistance, of a purely advisory nature, in support of the leaders and their negotiating teams, under United Nations auspices and in close liaison with my good offices mission in Cyprus. Delegations from both institutions visited Cyprus in December to discuss the exact scope of their work with both communities.

11. The sides have also engaged in intense work at the level of the various working groups of experts and technical committees. In particular, the working groups of experts on property, economy and European Union matters have met regularly to hold focused discussions at the technical level. In addition, on 26 October, the sides formalized the establishment of a legal expert group, which has been meeting since that date to begin the important work of drafting federal laws for a post-settlement Cyprus.

12. In addition to already functioning technical committees, during the reporting period the leaders agreed to put in place additional committees focusing on specific areas. For example, on 15 May 2015, they announced the establishment of a committee to promote cultural events that could bring the two communities closer together.

13. Notably, recognizing that the Cyprus issue can only be properly solved with due understanding of the perspectives of both women and men, on 28 May, the leaders agreed to establish the Committee on Gender Equality. The leaders also formulated a specific mandate for the Committee that makes clear reference to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Following the agreement, both sides appointed members to the Committee, which comprises both men and women. The Committee held its first meeting in August and has been meeting regularly ever since. Finally, on 25 November, the leaders agreed to establish a Technical

Committee on Education, which would review existing research and good practices in education in Cyprus and abroad and undertake new relevant research on how education might contribute to peace and reconciliation, work on devising a mutually acceptable mechanism for the implementation of confidence-building measures in schools and promote contact and cooperation between students and educators from the two communities. The Committee would also recommend best policy options and courses of action to allow for the coordination of the two educational systems, thereby contributing to a viable, sustainable and functional bicommunal and bizonal federation.

14. During the reporting period, as a sign of their shared commitment, the leaders agreed to work together on a number of confidence-building measures that would mutually benefit the two communities. The sides have since been working on the implementation of such confidence-building measures. As I have already reported, progress has been made on demining and crossing points, with the lifting of a requirement to fill in administrative forms at crossing points and increased access for the Committee on Missing Persons. However, the sides have yet to implement the earlier agreements on interconnectivity of electricity grids and the interoperability of mobile telephones. In an important visible sign of joint commitment, the leaders also made various joint public appearances at events and social gatherings, including addressing a conference on 8 July organized by the two chambers of commerce on the economic benefits of a settlement and at a concert organized by the Technical Committee on Culture, held in Famagusta on 28 July.

15. In support of the process, I have continued to keep the resolution of the Cyprus question high on the agenda of the United Nations and on the agenda of key regional and international leaders. I have held discussions on the Cyprus question with various Heads of State and senior officials, including the President, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey and the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece.

16. In addition, my Special Adviser has had extensive and regular contacts with international partners and relevant regional players. Such contacts culminated in the months of October and December 2015 with visits to the island by the Secretary of State of the United States of America, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, among other high-level visits. During the discussions and contacts with all foreign actors, my Special Adviser continued to tirelessly emphasize the significance of united international support.

IV. Observations

17. Since 15 May, the talks have maintained a steady pace and, while a great deal of work remains, the progress achieved on many issues has been encouraging and unprecedented. As shown also in recent polling, there is a growing expectation among the public in both communities that the overall positive atmosphere at the negotiation table and the constructive personal relationship between the leaders and their negotiating teams will indeed lead the process to its ultimate objective of reaching a comprehensive and durable settlement.

18. I am particularly heartened to note that the sides have engaged in negotiations with a problem-solving approach. The leaders have shown that, while each negotiates in the interests of his own community, each has been able to equally take into consideration the concerns of the other community in order to reach a settlement that is in the best interests of all citizens of a future united Cyprus.

19. During the reporting period, notwithstanding the fundamental principle that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed, the sides have been able to reach further convergences and mutual understandings. In particular, I note that the leaders have taken positive steps towards translating their common vision for a united Cyprus into concrete progress and strategic compromises on a number of key issues.

20. While it is clear that important work remains, I am encouraged by the openness and collaborative spirit that has characterized the engagement of the sides during the reporting period and by their common recognition of the need to grasp the current momentum and positive climate surrounding the process to move it forward.

21. In particular, I commend both leaders for their ongoing efforts to refrain from engaging in a blame game, and I encourage them instead to continue to use key opportunities to communicate jointly to the public in a constructive and coordinated manner, as they have already done on several occasions. That was demonstrated, for instance, with the joint statement issued by the leaders on 18 November, following the incidents that occurred two days prior in which Turkish Cypriots had been targeted during protests. Notably, during their last meeting of 2015, held on 20 December, the two leaders recorded an unprecedented joint New Year's video message, expressing their shared wish to see the country united during the course of 2016, both of them speaking in both Greek and Turkish.

22. I am also encouraged by the concrete steps undertaken to foster the participation of women in the negotiations. Notably, in addition to the establishment of the Committee on Gender Equality, both sides have increased the number of women who are directly involved in the talks, either as members of the negotiating teams or as members of the working groups of experts, often in leading positions. Those steps are a testimony to the increasing awareness, in the context of the Cyprus peace process, of the importance of ensuring a greater gender perspective in the talks.

23. I appreciate the readiness of the leaders to seek technical assistance in finding sustainable solutions to the economic issues in a post-settlement Cyprus. In that regard, I take positive note of the request by the leaders to my Special Adviser related to the provision of technical assistance on economic aspects of the talks and of the initial engagement that the sides have started to have with relevant international financial institutions, including the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. I believe that that rather innovative work will be important to ensuring that a solution will be economically and fiscally viable, while also creating opportunities for economic growth and stability in a post-settlement phase.

24. Remarkably, Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom have, despite heavy domestic agendas and other increasingly difficult pressing issues relating to dealing with the refugee and migration crisis in Europe, shown firm and steady commitment

throughout the period to supporting efforts to reach a comprehensive solution of the Cyprus issue in the foreseeable future.

25. The United Nations continues to remain fully engaged in support of the efforts of the sides to find a comprehensive settlement. My mission of good offices and the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) work in full synergy, which is ensured also through the role that the Special Representative and Head of UNFICYP has as my Deputy Special Adviser. Furthermore, UNFICYP continues to provide administrative and logistical support to the Office of the Special Adviser, which is key to the smooth conduct of meetings between the leaders and negotiators, as well as the many meetings held by technical committees, eight of which UNFICYP currently facilitates, and by working groups of experts. In the light of the positive developments on the ground, my good offices mission has maintained close coordination with UNFICYP as the latter has intensified its planning in relation to a settlement, as requested by the Security Council, most recently in its resolution 2234 (2015). That planning will continue to be guided by developments in the negotiations and the views of the sides on a possible role for the United Nations in that respect.

V. Conclusions

26. While there is no official timeline for the negotiations, I remain convinced that there is a real, unique window of opportunity for the process to finally succeed. I firmly believe that the months ahead remain crucial if the sides are to achieve the key and tough compromises necessary to reach a comprehensive settlement as soon as possible.

27. At a time characterized by extreme political volatility and with a geopolitical situation in which societies have been ripped apart and violence is ever growing, the negotiations to solve this long-standing conflict offer a beacon of hope. The manner in which the leaders and their negotiators have engaged across the table, showing political will, leadership and increasing mutual trust, is an encouraging reminder that, through real dialogue and mutual efforts, even the most entrenched conflicts can be resolved through a negotiated solution.

28. In order to move forward, the sides need to reach further convergences on outstanding issues across chapters, particularly on property. I am also confident that progress achieved on property will lead to increased readiness by both sides to engage in substantive negotiations on territory and security and guarantees, given that there is an understanding that in-depth negotiations on those issues will take place towards the final stages of the process.

29. There is no room for complacency, given that substantial work remains ahead. It is my conviction, however, that a settlement is today closer than ever. I therefore call upon the leaders to maintain the momentum, as the talks are well into the substantive phase in which core issues across chapters are being considered. I encourage them to continue to negotiate on those issues with good faith, political will, leadership and mutual trust.

30. I believe that an agreement is within reach, and I trust that the leaders and all Cypriots will do their utmost at this crucial time to grasp the current opportunity and to finally translate the vision of a united Cyprus into a reality.

31. In conclusion, I wish to thank my Special Adviser, Espen Barth Eide, and my Special Representative, Lisa Buttenheim, and the personnel serving in my good offices mission in Cyprus for the dedication and commitment with which they have discharged the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Security Council.

United Nations S/2016/16

Security Council

Distr.: General
11 January 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 7 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you a copy of resolution No. 7987 adopted at the Ministerial Meeting of the Council of the League of Arab States, held on 24 December 2015, and entitled "Unified Arab position on the violation by Turkish forces of the sovereignty of Iraq" (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex to the Member States as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Amr **Aboulatta**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

16-00301 (E) 120116 120116

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Annex to the letter dated 7 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Arabic]

Unified Arab position on the violation by Turkish forces of the sovereignty of Iraq

The Council of the League of Arab States, meeting at the ministerial level in extraordinary session on 24 December 2015 at the headquarters of the League Secretariat in Cairo under the Chairmanship of the United Arab Emirates,

Acting in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and in compliance with the Charter of the League of Arab States, which provides for the preservation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of member States and non-intervention in their internal affairs,

Pursuant to resolutions of the League Council at the summit level on preserving the security of the Arab States, which constitute the basic guarantee of Arab security,

With a view to protecting Arab security and the territorial sovereignty of the Arab States against any kind of intervention or threat thereof, which would constitute an intervention in their affairs and a violation of their territorial sovereignty and integrity,

Reaffirming that the building of constructive and productive relations between the Arab world and the surrounding region should be based on respect for national sovereignty and non-intervention in internal affairs,

Having considered:

The note of the Secretariat,

The note of the Republic of Iraq dated 21 December 2015,

And having heard the statements of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and the heads of delegation,

Decides

1. To express its condemnation of the Turkish Government for its forces' incursion into Iraqi territory, which is a violation of Iraqi sovereignty and a threat to Arab security;

2. To demand that the Turkish Government immediately and unconditionally withdraw its forces from Iraqi territory;

3. To support the Iraqi Government in any measures it may take in accordance with the relevant principles of international law to ensure that the Turkish Government withdraws its forces from Iraqi territory;

4. To demand that the Turkish Government refrain from violating Iraqi sovereignty in the future under any pretext whatsoever;

5. To request the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States to transmit the Council's resolution on this matter formally to the President of the United Nations Security Council;

6. To request the Arab member of the United Nations Security Council to press for the withdrawal of Turkish forces from Iraqi territory, and for all necessary measures to be taken until such time as they have fully done so.

Resolution 7987, extraordinary session, 24 December 2015

United Nations A/ES-10/708–S/2016/17

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
7 January 2016

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Identical letters dated 7 January 2016 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Despite the renewed sense of hope in the international community at the start of a new year, hope is regrettably absent in the Occupied State of Palestine, as the Palestinian people have begun yet another year under Israel's belligerent military occupation and the prospects to end this illegal situation and decades-long injustice are as dismal as ever. Throughout the holiday season and into this first week of the year, Palestinian civilians continued to suffer the brutality and criminality of the Israeli occupation, enduring daily civilian casualties, including numerous children and women, and intensifying acts of repression and collective punishment affecting every single aspect of life.

It is in this context that the Palestinian leadership continues to call for international protection for the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. International humanitarian law provides for the protection of civilian persons in situations of armed conflict, including situations of foreign occupation, in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention. Palestinian civilians are in urgent need of protection, as they remain defenceless and vulnerable in the face of daily killings and injuries committed by the Israeli occupying forces with zero accountability to deter these crimes. We thus again call on the international community to provide protection to the Palestinian people and underscore the particular responsibility of the Security Council in this regard.

As of this date, it has been documented that, since the current period of unrest began on 1 October 2015, 148 Palestinians, among them 27 children and 7 women, have been killed by the occupying forces and terrorist Israeli settlers. Thousands more have been injured, with over 7,000 wounded by either live ammunition or rubber-coated bullets and over 10,000 suffering tear gas inhalation as occupying forces continue to use excessive and indiscriminate force against the Palestinian civilians, and hundreds of others have been assaulted by Israeli soldiers and settlers.

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The recent tragedy that struck the Hammad family of the village of Silwad, north-east of Ramallah, is just one example of the criminal brutality of this occupation that continues to destroy the lives of generations of Palestinians and continues to make peace and coexistence seemingly impossible. On 25 December, Christmas Day, a mother of four children was shot and killed by Israeli occupying forces in cold blood. Mahdiya Mohammed Ibrahim Hammad, age 38, was driving in her car on the afternoon of that day when Israeli soldiers approached her car with weapons pointed. In fear and panic, Mahdiya raised up her hands, yet the car continued to move slowly and the Israeli soldiers began firing at her from all sides. The car veered and hit a cement wall, and yet the soldiers continued to fire at her and even prevented an ambulance from approaching, denying Mahdiya medical aid and leaving her to bleed to death from the 17 bullets shot at her body, including her face, chest and pelvis, and leaving four young children, including a 10-month-old baby, without a mother for the rest of their lives.

The tragic end of Mahdiya's life is symbolic of the tragedies suffered by innumerable Palestinian families as a result of the wrath of this illegal Israeli occupation. The following are just some of the crimes perpetrated by the Israeli occupying forces and terrorist Israeli settlers in the recent period against the Palestinian people, and this includes attacks causing death and injury as well as deliberate, illegal acts of colonization and destruction:

24 December 2015:

- Mohammed Zahran (23) was killed after occupying forces had fired multiple shots at him near Salfit
- Eyad Jamal Issa Ideis (25) was killed by occupying forces at the "Ari" military checkpoint
- Wisam Naser Abu Ghwailie (age 20) was shot dead by occupying forces near the illegal settlement of "Adam", located on the land of Jaba town, north-west of Jerusalem
- Bilal Omar Zayed (age 23) was shot dead by occupying forces in the Qalandiya refugee camp

25 December 2015:

- Hani Rafiq Wahdan (age 22) was shot dead by Israeli occupying forces near the Al-Shujayyia neighbourhood in the Gaza Strip

26 December 2015:

- Mos'ab Mahmoud Al-Ghazali (age 26), was shot by occupying forces near the Bab Al-Jadid area in Jerusalem and was left on the ground to bleed to death
- Maher Zaki Al-Jabi (age 56) was killed by occupying forces at the Huwara checkpoint in Nablus

27 December 2015:

- Noureddine Saba'aneh (age 23) and Mohammed Rafeeq Saba'aneh (age 17) were fatally shot by Israeli occupying forces in Huwara village, south of Nablus

- Occupying forces prevented Palestinians from farming their land near Qusra, south of Nablus
- A young Palestinian woman, Enas Al-Sayori (age 23), was injured after an attempted kidnapping by terrorist settlers near Shuafat in Occupied East Jerusalem

28 December 2015:

- Occupying forces detained 14 Palestinians and summoned 8 others in predawn and night raids
- Israel is proceeding with plans for settlement construction in the so-called "E-1" area between the illegal settlement bloc of "Ma'aleh Adumim" and Occupied East Jerusalem
- Yousef Abu Sbeikha (age 48) died of wounds sustained on 25 December after being shot by Israeli occupying forces in central Gaza

29 December 2015:

- Four Palestinian children were attacked by an Israeli settler and occupying forces, including a Palestinian girl, Dana Al-Tamimi (age 7), who was repeatedly struck by the settler, suffering smashed teeth and bruises and cuts on her head, while occupying forces attacked Dana's brother, Mo'tasm (age 10), and two other children, brothers Nabil and Farhat Al-Rajbi (ages 10 and 14)
- Occupying forces demolished a two-storey home under construction belonging to a Palestinian family in the village of Sour Baher, south-east of Jerusalem
- Israeli occupying forces razed an agricultural land near Beit Sahour, east of Bethlehem
- Israel issued military orders for the confiscation of 500 dunums of Palestinian land south of Nablus
- The occupying Power issued administrative detention orders, without charge or trial, against 36 Palestinians; 17 others received renewed orders

30 December 2015:

- Occupying forces detained 28 Palestinians, including 9 children, from across the West Bank
- Israeli occupying forces issued an order to demolish the family house of Mohammed Abdul Baset Al-Hroub, who is being detained in an Israeli prison

31 December 2015:

- Hasan Bzoor (age 22) was killed by Israeli occupying forces near Beita junction, south of Nablus
- Shadi Ghabish (age 38) died of wounds sustained on 4 December 2015 near the Al-Jalazoun refugee camp, north of Ramallah

- Extremist settlers from the illegal settlement "Mabo Dothan" near the Palestinian village of Yabad, south-west of Jenin, assaulted a Palestinian taxi driver and threw stones at Palestinian vehicles
- Israeli occupying forces razed a Palestinian-owned plot of land in Wadi Sa'ir, east of Al-Khalil, in order to establish a military watchtower in the area
- Occupying forces detained nine Palestinians from across the West Bank

2 January 2016:

- Israeli warplanes launched a series of air strikes targeting several locations across the Gaza Strip, causing extensive damage to properties and panic and fear among the civilian population

3 January 2016:

- Extremist settlers torched eight Palestinian-owned cars in the Al-Thawri neighbourhood of Jerusalem
- The leader of an extremist Israeli "anti-assimilation" group called "Lehava" recently renewed his calls to burn churches in Occupied East Jerusalem
- Israeli occupying forces detained 12 Palestinians from the West Bank districts, including Jerusalem, and summoned 4 others for interrogation

4 January 2016:

- Israeli occupying forces detained at least 20 Palestinians during predawn and night raids
- Occupying forces filled with cement the homes of the two Palestinians, Alaa Abu Jamal and Bahaa Elayyan, who had been shot and killed by occupying forces in October 2015
- Occupying forces opened fire at Palestinian farmers trying to reach their fields east of Gaza City

5 January 2016:

- Ahmad Kawazbeh (age 18) was shot dead by occupying forces near the illegal "Gush Etzion" settlement area, north of Al-Khalil
- Occupying forces detained a total of 17 Palestinians, including at least 4 children, from several West Bank villages and towns
- Israeli occupying forces confiscated construction materials and equipment belonging to the municipality of Dahiriya, south-west of Al-Khalil
- The occupying Power ordered the demolition of two farm structures in Beit Ummar, north of Al-Khalil

6 January 2016:

- Occupying forces demolished five dwellings of Palestinian Bedouin families in the Abu Nuwwar community, east of Jerusalem, part of the so-called "E-1" corridor, leaving 25 people homeless

- Israeli occupying forces detained at least 18 Palestinians, including several children, in multiple predawn detention raids across the West Bank
- Occupying forces fired at Palestinian fishing boats off the coast of Gaza, setting one of the boats on fire and destroying it
- The occupying Power is proceeding with plans to illegally construct a settlement on the land of a southern West Bank church compound. The church lies in a sensitive location between the illegal "Gush Etzion" settlement and illegal Israeli settlements around Al-Khalil, and its incorporation would establish a nearly continuous line of settlements between Jerusalem and Al-Khalil

7 January 2016:

- Occupying forces demolished two Palestinian homes in the Ein El-Lawza area of Jerusalem
- Occupying forces targeted Palestinian fishermen near Gaza City with gunfire
- Occupying forces killed three young Palestinian men north of Al-Khalil near the illegal settlement of "Gush Etzion"

In the face of such incessant crimes and the systematic violation of their human rights, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the Palestinian people to believe in the promises of the rule of law and in the prospects for peace and justice. The increasing violence, extremism and cruelty of the Israeli occupation are destroying all such convictions with each passing day. We therefore again urge the international community to renew its resolve to redress this injustice and to ensure protection to the Palestinian people until a solution is secured.

We specifically implore the Security Council to uphold its Charter duties to address this conflict, which is undeniably a threat to regional and international peace and security. A credible political horizon is urgently needed to restore conviction in international law and in a negotiated political solution. The Council cannot stand idly by as the situation continues to deteriorate and tensions continue to rise in a region already in grave turmoil. It should act immediately to adopt a resolution that reaffirms the parameters of the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders and in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet commitment to achieve a just, lasting solution and that sets a clear time frame for an end to the Israeli occupation and the fulfilment of Palestinian rights, including to self-determination and freedom in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital. As we approach the forty-ninth year since the onset of the Israeli military occupation of the Palestinian land, we appeal for collective, serious and responsible action to salvage the prospects for peace and to set the Palestinian and Israeli peoples on the path towards its realization.

This letter is in follow-up to our 570 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 23 December 2015 (A/ES-10/707-S/2015/1023), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being

committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations

United Nations S/2016/18

Security Council

Distr.: General
7 January 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 7 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to request that the item entitled "Letter dated 3 December 1971 from the Permanent Representatives of Algeria, Iraq, the Libyan Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council" (S/10409) relating to the question of the occupation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, be retained on the list of items of which the Security Council is seized for the year 2016 and until such time as the dispute is resolved by peaceful means through direct negotiations or through the International Court of Justice, thereby ensuring a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the issue and achieving peace, security and regional and international stability.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Lana **Nusseibeh**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

16-00236 (E) 120116

Please recycle

United Nations S/2016/19

Security Council

Distr.: General
8 January 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 7 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you a letter from the representative of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces dated 7 January 2016 (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Raimonda **Murmokaitė**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

16-00229 (E) 110116

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 7 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

It is with great urgency that I draw your attention to the besieged town of Madaya, where 42,000 people are being starved into submission by Assad regime forces and Hezbollah militias.

Today, more than six months after the Assad regime lay siege on Madaya, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance announced that the Assad regime had belatedly approved the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Madaya. But promises to grant access are not enough. The regime has not even granted immediate access; they have said it will be allowed in four days. Under the best of circumstances, it will thus still take days before civilians in Madaya can access the food, water and medical care that they urgently require. In the meantime, according to doctors in the city, many more will die. And it remains entirely unclear whether United Nations agencies will have the full, unimpeded and unconditional access that they require to serve all those in need.

The starving civilians of Madaya cannot afford to wait any longer for the delivery of humanitarian aid, nor should they have to. Access to food, water and medical care is not a luxury that the Assad regime should be permitted to grant and withhold as it chooses. The denial of humanitarian assistance is a war crime and a breach of international law, including the Geneva Conventions and Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015). Those resolutions are clear: starvation as a method of war — including through the besiegement of populated areas — violates international law and must be met with clear consequences. Failure to enforce such consequences only encourages parties who starve civilians into submission.

On behalf of the Syrian people, I therefore call on the Security Council to:

1. Ensure that United Nations agencies and humanitarians have immediate, unhindered, unconditional and sustained access to all areas of Madaya, as required by Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015);

2. Monitor closely the ongoing developments in Madaya, and ensure that any attempt by the Syrian regime to deny or hinder access is met with clear consequences;

3. Demand the enforcement of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015), and instruct United Nations agencies to demand the delivery of aid to besieged and hard-to-reach areas, irrespective of Syrian regime consent;

4. Condemn in the strongest terms the Assad regime's deliberate starvation of innocent civilians in Madaya, and make clear that starvation is not a tool to be employed at the Assad regime's discretion.

If the Security Council is unable to take such steps because of Russian intransigence, Member States must take the necessary steps. Crucially, Member States should help the United Nations to fulfil its mandate to deliver aid irrespective of consent. More should be done to apply pressure on the regime, including through a renewed look at the feasibility of drone-delivered aid and air drops by those States currently conducting air operations against ISIS in Syria.

We profoundly regret the decision of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to "welcome" the Assad regime's announcement that it would grant United Nations agencies access to Madaya. It wrongly implies that the provision of humanitarian access is optional, rather than a legal obligation. The use of starvation as a tool of war is a war crime, for which the Assad regime must be held accountable.

(*Signed*) Najib **Ghadbian**
Special Representative to the United Nations

United Nations A/70/652–S/2016/20

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
11 January 2016

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventieth session
Agenda item 34
Prevention of armed conflict

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Letter dated 6 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Turkmenistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Ashgabat outcome document, adopted on 12 December 2015 as a final document of the high-level international conference on the theme "Policy of neutrality: international cooperation for peace, security and development", which was successfully held in Ashgabat on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan (see annex).

This conference was attended by an unprecedented number of Heads of State and Government, heads of international organizations, ministers for foreign affairs and high-ranking officials from countries representing different continents.

Initiated by permanently neutral Turkmenistan, as a country with a majority Muslim population, the conference contributed significantly to the peacebuilding efforts of the United Nations by offering tremendous opportunities to address the challenges and strengthen the conflict prevention and resolution tools of the Organization in turbulent regions.

Today, the international community has difficulty in keeping pace with the evolution of each conflict. We are finding it harder to end conflicts and to sustain peace. The outcome of the high-level international conference on the theme "Policy of neutrality: international cooperation for peace, security and development" is a valuable input to the international efforts in tackling pressing challenges to peace and security and ensuring a sustainable future for the next generations.

I would be very grateful if you could have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Aksoltan **Ataeva**
Permanent Representative

16-00326 (E) 180116

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 6 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Turkmenistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Outcome document of the high-level international conference on the theme "Policy of neutrality: international cooperation for peace, security and development" (Ashgabat outcome document)

Heads of State and Government, Speakers of Parliaments, Ministers and officials of United Nations Member States, and representatives of entities of the United Nations system, international and regional organizations and academic institutions, reaffirming their commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, were assembled in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, on 12 December 2015, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the neutrality of Turkmenistan, at the high-level international conference on the theme "Policy of neutrality: international cooperation for peace, security and development" pursuant to United Nations General Assembly resolution 69/285 of 3 June 2015, entitled "Permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan".

Participants of the international conference

1. *Recognized* the significance of United Nations General Assembly resolutions 50/80 A of 12 December 1995 and 69/285 of 3 June 2015, entitled "Permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan", for maintaining peace and security at the regional and global levels,

2. *Affirmed* the importance of continuing to uphold the principles of sovereignty and the sovereign equality of States, territorial integrity, self-determination and non-intervention in the internal affairs of any State, and to defend, promote and encourage the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security are not endangered,

3. *Stressed* the importance of enhancing dialogue among religions, cultures and civilizations and maintaining a culture of peace, through supporting efforts made at the international level to reduce confrontation, suppress xenophobia and Islamophobia and promote respect for diversity,

4. *Underlined* that the policy of neutrality, being declared and pursued by the Member States of the United Nations, contributes to the strengthening of peace and security in relevant regions and at the global level and plays an important role in developing peaceful, friendly and mutually beneficial relations between the countries of the world,

5. *Recognized* that the policy of neutrality is closely interconnected with and based on the tools of preventive diplomacy, such as early warning and prevention of conflict, mediation, good offices, fact-finding missions, negotiation, the use of special envoys, informal consultations, peacebuilding and targeted development activities,

6. *Noted* that preventive diplomacy is a core function of the United Nations and is central to the role of the United Nations Secretary-General, and in this regard recognized the important role of the special political missions of the United Nations

and the good offices of the Secretary-General in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding,

7. *Underlined* in this regard that the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, established in Ashgabat in December 2007 with the support of the international community, plays an important role in assisting the Central Asian States in addressing regional challenges by encouraging and facilitating closer cooperation among them, identifying and tackling potential sources of tension before a possible escalation, and responding to domestic and transnational challenges and threats to peace and security by supporting the sustainable development of the region,

8. *Affirmed* the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding, which are integral elements of the policy of neutrality, and called for an increase in the equal participation, representation and full involvement of women in preventive diplomacy efforts and all related decision-making processes with regard to conflict resolution and peacebuilding,

9. *Stressed* that the policy of permanent neutrality is a key factor for providing conditions and building a platform for peaceful negotiations, and in this regard underlined the contribution of neutral Turkmenistan in the United Nations-led inter-Tajik talks through the initiative to host the continual round of the inter-Tajik talks in Ashgabat in 1995-1996, and in addressing the conflict in Afghanistan by hosting inter-Afghan talks and an international forum on Afghanistan in 1997 and continuing to offer the territory of Turkmenistan for further inclusive, Afghan-led dialogue on reconciliation,

10. *Recognized* the positive role that the countries with the status of neutrality play in the provision and delivery of humanitarian assistance in situations of complex emergencies and natural disasters, in accordance with the guiding principles for the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system, including the principle of neutrality,

11. *Stressed* that the fundamental elements of the policy of neutrality are in accordance with the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement, which are respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-interference in domestic affairs, equality and peaceful coexistence, and in this regard *noted* the support by the Non-Aligned Movement of the status of permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan expressed in the final document of the Eleventh Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, in 1995,

12. *Emphasizing* that the phenomenon of the concept of neutrality needs to be developed, *welcomed* the initiative of Turkmenistan to establish the Centre for Studies and Research on the Neutrality Phenomenon in International Law and International Relations within existing capacities in order to study and disseminate the knowledge related to the policies of neutrality through training sessions and workshops delivered by experts and organizations specializing in relevant fields,

13. *Commending* the decision of the Government of Turkmenistan to declare 2015 the Year of Neutrality and Peace, *invited* Member and observer States of the United Nations, the organizations of the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations, as well as civil society, including non-governmental organizations and individuals, to consider the proposal to proclaim an International Day of Neutrality and observe this day through education

and public awareness-raising activities to strengthen the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples,

14. *Underlining* that Turkmenistan regularly hosts the high-level international conferences on the policy of neutrality and *recognizing* that the dialogue on this theme contributes to the strengthening of global peace and security, *stressed* the need to continue convening such forums at least every five years,

15. *Expressed* deep appreciation and gratitude to the people and the Government of Turkmenistan for the excellent organization and hosting of the high-level international conference and the warm hospitality extended to the participants in the city of Ashgabat.

12 December 2015, Ashgabat

United Nations S/2016/21

Security Council

Distr.: General
8 January 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 7 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to notify you that the Government of Pakistan would like to see the following items retained on the list of matters of which the Security Council is seized:

(a) The India-Pakistan question;

(b) The Hyderabad question;

(c) The situation in the India/Pakistan subcontinent.

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Maleeha **Lodhi**

16-00238 (E) 110116

Please recycle

United Nations S/2016/22

Security Council

Distr.: General
8 January 2016
English
Original: Spanish

Letter dated 6 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, during its presidency of the Security Council in January 2016, Uruguay plans to hold an open debate on the topic "Protection of civilians", on 19 January.

In order to help guide the debate, Uruguay has prepared a concept note which is attached hereto (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

Accept, Sir, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

(*Signed*) Elbio **Rosselli**
Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations

16-00239 (E) 110116 110116

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 6 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English]

Security Council open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict

Concept note

Uruguay presidency — January 2016

Background

1. In his latest report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict issued in June 2015 (S/2015/453), the Secretary-General drew the attention of the Security Council to the deliberate targeting and indiscriminate attacks on civilians that have become a recurrent feature in many conflicts, resulting in increased levels of civilian casualties, displacement and human suffering. The report highlighted the challenges faced by humanitarian organizations to meet basic needs, including access restrictions and direct attacks against humanitarian personnel, supplies and facilities. The Secretary-General noted that prevailing disrespect for international humanitarian law by some States and non-State armed groups, and the pervasive impunity for violations, have become "one of the most critical challenges for the protection of civilians". The Security Council issued a presidential statement in November 2015 (S/PRST/2015/23) on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, making reference to the findings of the Secretary-General's June 2015 report and reiterating the need for systematic monitoring and reporting on the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

2. On 31 October 2015, the Secretary-General and the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) issued an unprecedented joint appeal to condemn the growing lack of respect for international humanitarian law and the decline in the protection of civilians in many conflicts. The Secretary-General and the ICRC President urged States to make every effort, individually and collectively, to achieve political solutions to conflicts, exert their influence to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law, hold perpetrators of violations accountable, grant unhindered access to and protect humanitarian and medical personnel and facilities and respond to the needs of internally displaced persons and refugees. These themes were at the centre of the thirty-second International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held in December 2015.

3. The urgent need to address the protection of civilians in conflict is also a central theme of the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (S/2015/446) and the subsequent report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Panel's recommendations (S/2015/682). These reports emphasized that the growing scale and intensity of conflict and the associated scale of human rights violations, attacks on civilians and forcible displacement were testing the limits of humanitarian and conflict responses.

4. In his implementation report, the Secretary-General underscored the responsibility of national authorities to protect civilians and sets out several

recommendations to strengthen the contribution that United Nations peace operations can make to protect civilians in conflict. He highlighted the centrality of political settlements to conflict to promote and to ensure the sustainable protection of civilians. The Secretary-General called upon the Security Council to provide active and consistent political and operational support for the protection of civilians in conflict, in particular in contexts in which State parties are involved in attacks against civilians.

5. The Secretary-General underscored that the protection of civilians was a mission-wide task and that mission-wide strategies and coherent monitoring and reporting arrangements would be put in place to reinforce the protection impact of peace operations. He also highlighted the role of unarmed protection actors in enhancing the protection of civilians, including local communities and non-governmental organizations.

6. In those situations in which peace operations have an explicit mandate to protect civilians, the Secretary-General highlighted the need for missions to have the capabilities and command structures to respond effectively and called upon all Member States to provide practical and political support to ensure that peace operations had the capabilities required to implement their mandates. A consistent theme of his report was the importance of sustained dialogue between the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop-contributing and police-contributing countries to enable a shared understanding of appropriate responses and their implications for the mandate, capabilities and conduct of a peace operation, which has significant relevance for protection of civilians efforts.

7. The Council welcomed the commitment of the Secretary-General to keep it informed of situations of escalating risk to civilians, mission capability shortfalls and any failure to implement their mandate, including to protect civilians (S/PRST/2015/22).

8. Furthermore, the Kigali principles on the protection of civilians put forward by several countries in May 2015[a] set out critical benchmarks to guide collective efforts to protect civilians in peace operations.

9. During a workshop organized by Australia and Uruguay in November 2015, there was a common understanding that protection is a whole-of-mission agenda rather than a responsibility of uniformed personnel. Political engagement and support for political settlements also constitute protection activities, and ultimately the best way to ensure that civilians are not threatened by violence is to ensure that conflicts are ended through sustainable and inclusive political processes.

Scope of the open debate

10. Uruguay, which will hold the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January 2016, will convene a Vice-Ministerial-level open debate on the protection of civilians.

11. This open debate will provide an important opportunity for the Security Council to address core and overarching issues for the protection of civilians in

[a] Available at http://civilianprotection.rw/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/REPORT_PoC_conference_Long-version.pdf.

armed conflict.[b] It will underscore the responsibilities of national actors for the protection of civilians and consider questions relating to the conduct of hostilities, humanitarian access, attacks on humanitarian and medical staff and facilities and displacement. It will also address the role of the Council in restoring the centrality of international humanitarian law to international efforts to protect civilians and in energizing compliance and accountability measures.

12. In looking at how United Nations peace operations can support and contribute to the protection of civilians in armed conflict, the open debate will provide an important opportunity to address how the Security Council can continue to strengthen its political engagement in situations of escalating risk to civilians and support negotiated political settlements that advance their protection. It will also provide an opportunity for the Council to examine how its dialogue with troop-contributing and police-contributing countries can systematically address protection needs and capabilities and how it can address serious shortfalls in the capabilities of missions to fulfil their mandates.

Objectives and expected outcomes:

- To reaffirm the Security Council's commitment to uphold the core protection of civilian standards as a matter of priority and send a clear message to parties to conflict that the international community and individual States stand ready to take action in order to ensure full respect for international humanitarian law.
- To discuss major protection of civilian trends and situations of concern requiring the international community's sustained attention and action, including the state of implementation of international humanitarian law across current conflicts.
- To exchange views and lay out concrete action required, based on tools available to the Council and the United Nations, to enhance compliance and accountability and overall protection in current conflict situations, with a view to informing the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit discussion on protection.
- To explore, in the context of United Nations peace operations, what improved reporting to the Security Council on situations of escalating risk to civilians would look like and how this can be effectively provided.

Date/Time: 19 January 2016 at 10 a.m.

Location: Security Council Chamber

Outcome: An informal summary of interventions made by Member States during the open debate will be shared.

[b] The last open debate organized under the official protection of civilians item on the Security Council agenda, in May 2015, was on the protection of journalists. The previous open debates on the protection of civilians, organized in January 2015 under the presidency of Chile, and in August 2014 under the presidency of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, focused, respectively, on the protection of women and on humanitarian access and the safety and security of humanitarian workers. The last open debates on the protection of civilians regarding compliance and accountability date back to August 2013 under the presidency of Argentina and to November 2011 under the presidency of Portugal.

Speakers:

- Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations
- To be confirmed: President of the International Committee of the Red Cross *[As custodian of the Geneva Conventions, state of implementation of international humanitarian law across current conflicts, including main issues and challenges pertaining to this implementation, consequences of violations and recommendations to address them]*.

United Nations A/70/658–S/2016/23

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
8 January 2016

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventieth session
Agenda item 37
The situation in the Middle East

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Letter dated 8 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit the letter of Javad Zarif, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, regarding the recent unfortunate developments between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 37, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Gholamali **Khoshroo**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

16-00251 (E) 120116

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 8 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I would like to begin by wishing you a happy, healthy and peaceful 2016 and to brief you about the unfortunate developments between Iran and Saudi Arabia that have unfolded in the past few days.

We are taking the final steps to announce the Implementation Day of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between Iran and the E3/EU+3 next week. We had all hoped — and continue to believe — that the resolution of the nuclear issue would enable all of us to focus on addressing the real challenge of extremist violence and terrorism that is ravaging our region and the world. President Rouhani has repeatedly declared that his foreign policy priorities are friendship with neighbours, peace and stability in the region and constructive engagement across the globe. His initiative for a World Against Violence and Extremism (WAVE) received unanimous support from the United Nations General Assembly in 2013, promising a more enlightened far-sighted global campaign against this menace.

Regrettably, immediately after the successful conclusion of the first interim nuclear agreement between Iran and the E3/EU+3 in November 2013, Saudi Arabia focused all its resources to prevent or defeat a comprehensive deal and preclude normalization in the region. Today, there are indications that some in Saudi Arabia are on a mission to drag the entire region into conflict, fearing that removal of the smokescreen of the manufactured Iranian nuclear threat would expose the real global threat posed by extremists and their sponsors. It is an unfortunate reality that most extremist perpetrators of acts of terror from 11 September 2001 to the recent senseless terrorist shooting in San Bernardino and all other episodes of extremist carnage in between — whether in Beirut, Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus, Istanbul and Peshawar or in Paris, London, Moscow, Madrid and Ottawa — and most members of Al-Qaida, the Taliban, ISIS and the Al-Nusrah Front were either Saudi nationals or those miseducated in Saudi-financed schools or otherwise brainwashed by petro-financed demagogues, who have promoted an anti-Islamic message of hatred, exclusion and sectarianism across the globe for decades.

The Saudi strategy to derail the nuclear agreement and maintain and even exacerbate tension in the region has focused on three interrelated domains: public relations and pressure in the West, promotion of and even active engagement in war and violence in the region and direct provocation against Iran. Examples of the first two are well known, while the cases of provocation against Iran have not grabbed international headlines thanks primarily to Iranian prudent restraint.

The Saudi public relations machine in Washington, with its strange bedfellows, spared no effort to mislead the United States public about the nuclear agreement throughout last summer. While it failed to defeat the nuclear deal, it now works overtime to compensate by spreading delusional hype against Iran.

On another front, in addition to supporting extremist terrorists in Syria and elsewhere, the senseless war waged by Saudi Arabia in Yemen has raged for nearly 10 months of a senseless aerial campaign targeting the people of Yemen. At the same time, impeding humanitarian access has led to the starvation of innocent civilians in Yemen, and all international efforts to establish a ceasefire and begin a dialogue between Yemeni groups and factions have been thwarted by Saudi Arabia.

Saudi authorities have also engaged in numerous direct and at times lethal provocations against Iran, as the third pillar of this strategy. Iranian self-restraint has prevented this concerted campaign to achieve its goal of exacerbating tension:

- Saudi bombers have hit Iranian diplomatic facilities in Yemen several times, including on 24 April and 18 September 2015 and 7 January 2016, killing two local service personnel, injuring a number of Yemeni guards and inflicting damage on the buildings;

- Saudi authorities have persistently mistreated Iranian pilgrims, fuelling public outrage in Iran:

  - On 28 March 2015, two Saudi immigration officers sexually molested two Iranian boys in Jeddah Airport in broad daylight. They have yet to be punished, as promised, for a crime that they and their extremist cohorts continue to shamelessly boast about on Saudi social media;

  - On 24 September 2015, as a result of the stampede during the Haj pilgrimage in Mena, a suspiciously disproportionate number of Iranian pilgrims — 464 innocent men, women, elderly persons and children — were killed, mostly because of at least utter Saudi negligence, and 521 were injured. For days, Saudi authorities arrogantly refused to respond to the repeated requests by the grieved families and the Iranian Government to have access to and repatriate the bodies, a problem that continues to linger;

- Saudi Government-appointed preachers have made a routine practice of hate speech not only against Iran but against all Shiite Muslims. One most nefarious example is a sermon on 31 March 2015 by Abdul Rahman al-Sudais, the Government-appointed prayer leader at the Mecca Holy Mosque, in which he made a litany of hate speech and incitement for violence against all Shiites, including: "Our war with Iran, say that out loud, is a war between Sunnis and Shiites ... Our war with Iran ... is truly sectarian. If it was not sectarian, we will make it sectarian ... Our disagreement with Rafidha [a derogatory reference to Shiites] will not be removed, nor our suicide to fight them ... as long as they are on the face of the earth ...."[a] The provocative and unjustifiable beheading of a leading Shiite scholar on 2 January 2016 followed another hate speech by the same demagogue on 1 January 2016;

- Saudi Arabia has also engaged in publicly declared economic warfare against Iran, boasting about its intention to strangulate the Iranian economy through a drastic reduction of oil prices;

- Saudi-backed terrorists have repeatedly targeted Iranian diplomatic posts, most notably through suicide attacks in Beirut on 19 November 2013 and in Peshawar on 24 February 2014, killing two Iranian diplomats, four Lebanese and three Pakistani security guards, injuring many innocent bystanders and causing extensive damage to the buildings.

In all these cases, the Islamic Republic of Iran, confident of the strength of its cause, conviction and people, refused to retaliate or break or even reduce diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia. Iran has called for Islamic unity in the face of Saudi

[a] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_2e6AlOhdE.

sectarian hate-mongering. And while the Saudi Government or its agents directly targeted Iranian diplomatic facilities, killing Iranian diplomats and other nationals, the Iranian Government has unequivocally condemned the assault against the Saudi Embassy and Consulate on 2 January 2016, ensured the safety and dignity of all Saudi diplomats, took immediate measures to help restore the Saudi diplomatic compound, declared at the highest level its determination to bring all perpetrators to justice, took disciplinary action against those failing to perform their duties to protect diplomatic compounds, and initiated an internal investigation to determine the causes and prevent any recurrence. Let me reiterate that the Islamic Republic of Iran is fully committed to comply with all its obligations in accordance with international law and relevant international instruments, especially the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 1963.

We have no desire for or interest in an escalation of tension in our neighbourhood. We all need to be united in the face of continued threats posed by extremists against all of us. In fact, from the first days after his election, President Rouhani and I have sent public and private signals to Saudi Arabia about our readiness to engage in dialogue and accommodation to promote regional stability and combat destabilizing extremist violence. Saudi Arabia has to make a crucial choice. Either it can continue supporting extremist terrorists and promoting sectarian hatred, or it can opt for good-neighbourliness and play a constructive role in promoting regional stability. We hope that Saudi Arabia will be persuaded to heed the call of reason.

(*Signed*) M. Javad **Zarif**

United Nations A/70/657–S/2016/24

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
11 January 2016

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventieth session
Agenda item 34 (a)
Prevention of armed conflict

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Letter dated 28 December 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from the Government of Ukraine, I have the honour to enclose herewith the appeal of the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine to parliaments of foreign States, the European Parliament and parliamentary assemblies of international organizations to extend and toughen sanctions against the Russian Federation for the organization of terrorist acts in Ukraine (see annex).

I would appreciate your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34 (a), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yuriy **Sergeyev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

16-00322 (E) 150116

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Annex to the letter dated 28 December 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Appeal of the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine to parliaments of foreign States, the European Parliament and parliamentary assemblies of international organizations to extend and toughen sanctions against the Russian Federation for the organization of terrorist acts in Ukraine

The Russian Federation continues to violate blatantly the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and is turning into a terrorist State. The increasing number of arrested terrorists, who are citizens of the Russian Federation and Ukraine and have been trained in special centres for reconnaissance and sabotage groups located on the territory of the Russian Federation to carry out terrorist attacks in Ukraine, pose a threat to the territorial integrity of Ukraine and the neighbouring States, while their involvement in the aggression against the people of Syria is evidence of the policy of transnational terrorism pursued by the Russian Federation's top rulers.

On 9 December 2015, members of yet another subversive terrorist group, with Russian citizens at its core, were apprehended in the cities of Kyiv and Kharkiv. The attempts to carry out terrorist acts and subversive activities in major cities of Ukraine represent proof that the Russian Federation is embarking on a course of State terrorism.

In view thereof, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine calls on parliaments of foreign States, the European Parliament and parliamentary assemblies of international organizations to:

- Demand that the Russian Federation cease its aggression against Ukraine;
- Extend and toughen sanctions against the Russian Federation;
- Establish personalized sanctions lists targeting the Russian Federation's top rulers who have introduced the regime of State terrorism;
- Intensify the international monitoring of the situation in the territories occupied by the Russian Federation in the areas of human rights and freedoms, and respond immediately to any such violations;
- Support the efforts of Ukraine aimed at the release of its citizens illegally kept in detention in the territory of the Russian Federation;
- Prevent impunity for those responsible for crimes against humanity committed since the beginning of the Russian terrorist aggression against Ukraine;
- Demand the full and unconditional implementation by the Russian Federation of its Minsk commitments.

We demand that the Russian Federation cease its aggression against Ukraine, release immediately and unconditionally all Ukrainian political hostages and prisoners, and abandon the practices of international terrorism.

United Nations S/2016/25

Security Council

Distr.: General
11 January 2016
English
Original: Arabic

Letter dated 7 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I should like to inform you of the latest developments regarding the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Ta'izz governorate, which continues to suffer from a crippling blockade imposed by the Houthi-Saleh rebel militia.

Despite statements from the United Nations, international organizations operating in that area continue to cooperate with the Houthis as if they were not the party responsible for the total blockade imposed on the governorate and for the humanitarian crimes being committed daily against civilians.

After five months of the blockade on Ta'izz and its four million inhabitants, the suffering of civilians in Ta'izz continues with no end in sight, in spite of agreements on the opening of safe humanitarian corridors into Ta'izz and the release of detainees reached by Government and rebel delegations at the second round of peace consultations conducted from 15 to 20 December 2015 under the auspices of your Special Envoy. Not only has the rebel side has done nothing to alleviate that suffering; it has tightened its repressive grip on the people of Ta'izz, which extends to their civilian health and education facilities, not to mention their homes.

The punishment being inflicted on Ta'izz by the Houthi rebels and Saleh loyalists is a stain on humanity. There is ample evidence that Houthi warlords and followers of the former president are stealing humanitarian assistance provided by international humanitarian organizations and enriching themselves on a black market that trades on the blood, suffering and pain of the people of Yemen.

To our deep regret, to date we have not heard any statements from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs or the resident coordinator making clear to the international community the gravity of the extremely dire humanitarian situation in Ta'izz.

The Houthi-Saleh rebel side has failed to implement the confidence-building measures that were agreed at the second round of consultations in Switzerland this past December. In particular, it has failed to lift the blockade imposed on Ta'izz and allow humanitarian assistance to reach the besieged inhabitants of the city who need it. That stance presages a major humanitarian catastrophe. In its most recent press release, the World Food Programme warns of the possibility of widespread starvation in that long-suffering yet steadfast city.

On behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Yemen, we urge you to take immediate action to end the suffering of the people of that governorate.

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The use of starvation as a weapon of war is a war crime punishable under international humanitarian law with no statute of limitations. The international community should take a determined stand on such flagrant violations.

We transmit herewith a letter from political parties, citizen groups and civil society organizations requesting your urgent intervention to put an end to the suffering of the people of Ta'izz governorate.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Khaled Hussein **Alyemany**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 7 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate

In its press release of 23 December 2015, the United Nations Security Council called on the Houthi-Saleh rebel coalition to lift its blockade on Yemeni cities, particularly Ta'izz governorate.

Nevertheless, the rebels are continuing to subject Ta'izz to horrific bombardments and attacks with heavy, medium and light weapons. On Wednesday, 30 December 2015, Al-Thawrah Hospital, the city's last functioning hospital, was bombed and destroyed in an unprecedentedly vicious criminal attack that went against all humanitarian values.

The city of Ta'izz has been under a total blockade for some time. Many of its inhabitants have been killed, and defenceless civilians have been displaced. The humanitarian situation has deteriorated to an unbearably painful degree. Foodstuffs and medicines are unobtainable. Many people are dying every day as a result of the blockade and vicious bombing by the rebels, who have rejected the authoritative resolutions adopted by the United Nations. Humanitarian assistance provided by the United Nations has failed to reach its rightful recipients. Instead, it has been seized by the rebels in the areas under their control.

The Yemeni political forces that have been adhering to international resolutions and calling for implementation of Security Council resolution 2216 (2015) hereby call on you, in the name of humanity and in compliance with international instruments, to intervene immediately to bring an end to the blockade of the city and save its inhabitants.

Your prompt intervention would play a major role in ensuring that the coming round of consultations on the implementation of resolution 2216 (2015) is convened in an atmosphere conducive to furthering your efforts to bring stability to Yemen.

Yemeni political forces:

The Yemeni Islah Party
The peaceful Southern Movement coalition
The Nasserist Unionist People's Organization
The Yemeni Socialist Party
The First Southern Conference (Cairo)
The General People's Congress
The Higher Coordination Body of the Yemeni Revolution
The National Solidarity Party
The Yemeni Guidance Party
The Justice and Reconstruction Party
The Awakening Movement for Peaceful Change
The Council for Youth and Peaceful Revolution
Representatives of youth and women

United Nations S/2016/26

Security Council

Distr.: General
8 January 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 8 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to inform you that the Government of the Sudan wishes to have retained on the list of matters of which the Security Council is seized item 55 in paragraph 3 of the summary statement by the Secretary-General of matters of which the Security Council is seized and of the stage reached in their consideration (S/2016/10), namely, the item entitled "Letter dated 20 February 1958 from the representative of the Sudan addressed to the Secretary-General" (S/3963).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Omer Dahab Fadl **Mohamed**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

16-00243 (E) 110116

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